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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3177
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 000268

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [CG](#) [ELECTIONS](#)

SUBJECT: UDPS SECRETARY GENERAL PREPARING FOR THE END

Classified By: PolCouns MSanderson, reasons 1.4 b/d.

1. (C) UDPS Secretary General Remy Masamba is simultaneously laying the groundwork for his party's conference and preparing for its demise. Invitations to national UDPS members to come to Kinshasa for the conference -- which would be held sometime between February 28 and March 2 -- are ready to be sent but Masamba needs UDPS leader Tshishekedi's final approval before dispatching them. Tshishekedi so far has not given his blessing, despite Masamba's repeated urgings. Masamba said that of course if the conference is held, Tshishekedi will be the UDPS candidate for the presidency.

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He continues to believe, however, that Tshishekedi will not actually run for office and indeed, probably will not even go through the necessary steps to register as a candidate (and a voter). (Note: Presidential candidates will have to come personally to the Kinshasa headquarters of the Independent Electoral Commission to register their candidacy. End Note.) Tshishekedi already has mentioned to Masamba more than once,

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he says, that there is "no need" for him, Tshishekedi, to go and register, especially since (President) Kabila is unlikely to do so. (Comment: Actually, Kabila's handlers might be able to persuade him to go because of the great optics, similar to what he garnered when he registered to vote. Tshishekedi's point, however, is that since he is at least as important as the actual president he should not be required to undergo the necessary formalities. End Comment.) Failing to come to the CEI offices personally would also keep Tshishekedi from being able to vote in upcoming elections, however, since as a special concession to the UDPS leader the CEI agreed that when UDPS candidates for office -- any public office -- register as candidates they may also register to vote if they have not already done so.

2. (C) Masamba is convinced that, one way or the other, Tshishekedi will not run and fears that the leader also will

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continue to try to block his senior supporters from running as well, in a gesture of symbolic opposition to the elections. Masamba says that he and many others will therefore run as independents representing traditional UDPS values. He says he has promises from "a large number" of UDPS senior officials and founding members, including provincial party leaders in the two Kasai provinces, that they will pursue this strategy rather than see their interests (both personal and political) minimized. Masamba hastened to assure PolCouns that of course he would never do anything to undercut Tshishekedi, but at the same time remarked, clearly agitated, that Tshishekedi is showing no regard for anyone's future but his own. He blamed Tshishekedi for "destroying" the UDPS with his ego, and predicted the virtual demise of the party, although a rump element would continue to exist as long as Tshishekedi is alive. Masamba said that once the former-UDPS independents are seated in parliament he will take charge of the group, which at that point can begin to function as a party. He said that he has been engaged in alliance negotiations with possible partners who could help strengthen his group's position in the future Parliament.

3. (C) Comment: Masamba played out a similar game once before, when he headed the independents element in the combined parliament established by the sovereign national conference. That "independent" group became the nucleus of the now-UDPS. In Masamba's world view, history will repeat itself -- somewhat, although this time he will be the new leader of the new party, taking up the fallen banner (as he put it at one point) of the UDPS. Whether things play out exactly as Masamba envisions or not, the UDPS as a party is

indeed under great strain and could easily break apart, for one reason or another, before elections. Meanwhile, Masamba will continue to bide his time while playing the role of faithful servitor to his (current) leader. End comment.
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